

Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Action Plan

Pilot Project Summary for West Oakland Forum

May 18, 2005

- I. Lead Agency:** Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)
- II. Project Area:** The community of West Oakland, Alameda County.

Area Demographics: 66% African American; 1% American Indian and Alaska Native; 7% Asian; 16% Latino (of any race); 11% white; Mean household income \$35,900; 40% living below the poverty level.
- III. Background:** The community of West Oakland has requested that the various local, state and federal agencies, who are involved in construction or waste cleanup activities, plan and implement their work collaboratively with the community to minimize or eliminate any future health or environmental impacts. This project will evaluate the effectiveness of a “government-to-community and community-to-government” forum which will facilitate information sharing and community involvement regarding cleanup and redevelopment projects in West Oakland, taking particular note of projects that impact children’s health.
- IV. Project Start Date:** May 2005
- V. Project End Date:** December 2006
- VI. Goal & Objectives:**
 - a. Goal:** Enhance the community’s role in local, state and federal decisions regarding site-specific activities with the anticipation of a better understanding of community needs and concerns, and a more participative decision-making process. While the forum will deal broadly with these issues, DTSC will focus on projects related to Brownfields and children’s health. West Oakland has a number of properties where Brownfields cleanups are contemplated. It is DTSC’s intention that the community, which will include local elected and planning officials, play a strong role in prioritizing these issues and potential projects so they can be addressed appropriately and with full community participation. These projects will be addressed so they meet the overall goals and needs of the West Oakland Community, and fit timelines for the overall revitalization of West Oakland. DTSC intends to utilize the expertise and knowledge from the other Cal/EPA boards, departments or offices when necessary to address exposures, public health or environmental effects from the combined emissions and discharges within the West Oakland community including environmental pollution from all sources. DTSC will take into account impacts to sensitive populations and socio-economic factors where applicable and to the extent data are available. With regards to its decisions to the Brownfields cleanups, DTSC will take anticipatory action

to protect public health or the environment if a reasonable threat of serious harm exists based upon the best available science and other relevant information, even if absolute and undisputed scientific evidence is not available to assess the exact nature of risk.

b. Objectives:

- Identify community priorities related to Brownfields projects within the West Oakland Community, taking into account the community's overall goals and needs, and the cumulative impacts from environmental factors associated with air and water quality, and other environmental health impacts.
- Work with the community to identify suitable cleanup options and scenarios for identified properties.
- Work with community members to identify where precaution is necessary and which options may be preferable.
- Assist in the development of a "Good Neighbor Policy" for West Oakland to promote corporate and agency accountability.
- Utilize the expertise of other Cal/EPA BDOs addressing other environmental health issues within the community.
- Engage with community leaders and other public agencies (including the local planning agency) to identify and address environmental concerns early.

VII. Activities – Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, & Deliverables

Planning

- **Site Selection:** DTSC will work with West Oakland's local entities, elected officials, community-based groups and residents to inventory Brownfields properties in the community; prioritize, identify community goals for revitalization; and identify precautionary measures.
- **Reduction of Risk to Children's Health:** 31 percent of West Oakland's population is under 17 years of age, which represents about 6,000 children. During hearings and in other communications, community residents have complained that poor planning and uncoordinated environmental oversight have resulted in increased risks from exposure to transportation routes, industrial emissions, and toxic contaminants in soils. The Pacific Institute wrote in its Environmental Indicators Project that "West Oakland residents face a high concentration of Brownfields, lead contamination, illegal dumping, and industrial activity." The health impacts on children are unknown at this time. Within the context of precautionary measures and cleanup goals, DTSC will focus its actions and decisions so they address children's health issues. Information related to children's health will be developed and made available to the community as necessary.

- **Cal/EPA Cross-Media Implication:** This project will establish an opportunity for the selected West Oakland community to interact with all agencies proposing projects in the area that may impact one or more media. DTSC will work with other Cal/EPA Boards, Departments, and Office to address cumulative impacts from other environmental sources in the community.
- **Partnerships:** DTSC will work with the West Oakland Toxics Collaborative which includes representatives from the US EPA, the Bay Area Quality Management District, the City of Oakland, Alameda County, transportation and trucking companies, the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project, the Pacific Institute, Pacific Gas & Electric, residents, Port of Oakland, West Oakland Neighbors, the state Department of Health Services, and local Native American Tribes in this effort.

Implementation

- **Methodology & Performance Indicators:** Inventory of Brownfield sites within West Oakland. DTSC will work with forum members to identify the Brownfields sites within the West Oakland boundaries. Current and proposed land uses and timeline for action will be identified. Where necessary, DTSC will perform a Phase I Environmental Assessment to determine the potential health risks associated with the site. DTSC will take any precautionary measures necessary to reduce or eliminate potential risks associated with these sites throughout this process. DTSC will work with the Forum to identify cumulative impacts within the West Oakland community. DTSC will utilize the expertise of other Cal/EPA BDOSs as appropriate. Cleanup options will be considered within the context of community health, community priorities and cumulative impacts.
- **Public Participation:** Community leaders will be actively sought to participate in this process. Elected and appointed officials as well as residents and community activists will be contacted. Each contact will receive a description of the forum process and proposed outcomes and benefits, and will be asked if they wish to participate, or if they have recommendations of others who may wish to participate. Also, these contacts will be asked to identify which local, state and federal agencies should participate in this process. The forum will consist of regularly scheduled meetings at the least on a quarterly basis. Site specific meetings will occur on a more frequent basis.

▪ **Project Work Plan & Timeline:**

	Activity	Start Date	End Date
Phase 1	1. Identify pilot project location(s)	1st Qtr 2005	1st Qtr 2005
	2. Define project parameters	1st Qtr 2005	1st Qtr 2005
Phase 2	1. Collect Project Data	2nd Qtr 2005	2nd Qtr 2005
	2. Identify Project Data Gaps	2nd Qtr 2005	4th Qtr 2005
	3. Establish Local Advisory Groups (LAGs)	1st Qtr 2005	2nd Qtr 2005
Phase 3	1. Develop Children's Environmental Risk Reduction Plan (ChERRP)	3rd Qtr 2005	4th Qtr 2005
Phase 4	1. Implement ChERRP	1st Qtr 2006	3rd Qtr 2006
Phase 5	Evaluate ChERRP	4th Qtr 2006	4th Qtr 2006
	Explore implementation options of project	4th Qtr 2006	4th Qtr 2006

Evaluation & Deliverables

Results:

- Brownfields cleanups that address priorities related to community health and revitalization of the West Oakland Community.
- Improved coordination between local, state and federal agencies, and the community.
- Educational materials related to cumulative impacts and cumulative health.
- Reduction of exposures to environmental hazards in West Oakland.

Deliverables:

- A survey of Brownfields sites in West Oakland
- Documentation of community priorities and health exposures.
- An analysis of precautionary approaches taken and their impacts on reducing health exposures.
- An analysis of the forum concept and its applicability to other areas in the state
- Educational materials focusing on children's health.

Considerations, Anticipated Challenges/Constraints: Coordinating the many layers of government and community leaders will involve significant staff time. All parties will not agree on the direction and implications of the various issues raised in the forum. Agencies must overcome the significant mistrust of government which exists within this community.

VIII. For More Information: Comments, Questions, or Concerns regarding this Pilot?

Comments, Questions, or Concerns regarding this Pilot?

Please direct comments, questions, or concerns to:

via Email: **EnvJustice@calepa.ca.gov**

via Postal Mail: **Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Program**
 PO Box 2815
 Sacramento, CA 95812

via Phone: **Jim Marxen at (916) 324-6544**

Project Contacts:

Jim Marxen
Chief, Public Participation Program, DTSC

Caren Trgovcich
Chief, Statewide Cleanup Operations Division, DTSC

Vanessa Byrd
Chief, Education & Outreach Program, DTSC

DTSC Environmental Justice Coordinators:

Jim Marxen
Chief, Public Participation Program, DTSC

Vanessa Byrd
Chief, Education and Outreach, DTSC